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**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ADOPTS
OBEY'S PRIORITIES TO HELP AMERICA'S FAMILIES**

*Labor, HHS and Education Bill Targets Deficits
in Healthcare, Education and Other Priorities*

The House Appropriations Committee today approved the changes in direction for the country on healthcare and education that were proposed by Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) in the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Bill for next year.

“We cannot disinvest in the country’s future without creating the kind of future that no one wants, but that’s what the Administration has been doing for six years now,” said Obey.

“This bill targets additional resources to areas where the nation is facing deficits, like the deficits in access to healthcare and education. We can't erase those deficits in a single year, but we can begin. This bill rejects the arbitrary cuts called for by the President and invests a small portion of the resources that are needed to get us where we want to be, as a nation, in ten years.”

Obey noted that the bill cuts or eliminates 41 low priority programs and invests in beginning to close the deficits in key priorities, including:

~ The Family Health Care Deficit “the bill includes five initiatives to help address problems faced by the uninsured and the underinsured:

1. It adds another \$200 million for community health centers; allowing them to serve an additional one million uninsured people.
2. It provides \$75 million for State health access grants, a new initiative to help States expand health care coverage to targeted groups.

3. It includes funds to help Wisconsin and several other States provide high risk insurance pools

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4. It allows for health insurance counseling so that 45 million Medicare beneficiaries can fully understand and utilize their benefits.

5. It provides funding for State "gap filler" grants to increase the number of trade-impacted workers who are able to take advantage of the Health Coverage Tax Credit,

~ The Medical Research Deficit " the bill continues the process of reversing a three year cut in medical research funding. As a result, the National Institutes of Health will be able to support another 1,262 new and competing research grants over the President's request. The bill also lifts a two-year freeze on the average cost of new research grants; helps train the next generation of researchers; and provides additional resources for the landmark National Children's Study and for the global AIDS fund.

~ The Higher Education Access Deficit " The bill builds on the previous year's increase in the Pell Grant program by raising the maximum award to \$4,700, increasing the maximum Pell Grant by a total of \$650 over two years to help over 5.5 million low- and middle-income students

cope with high college costs.

“Within the next ten years there are going to be fifty million more Americans over the age of 65, eleven million more Americans without health insurance, over two million more kids in our colleges, and even more than that in our primary schools,” Obey concluded. “Instead of spending billions on the war in Iraq and on tax cuts for people making over a million bucks a year, this bill begins to make the long-term investments in areas like healthcare, education, and medical research that will prepare us for the kind of future we all want.”

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